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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable BENJAMIN NELSON, a Senator from the State of Nebraska.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, who made humanity to be one, we bow in reverence before Your glorious presence, praying that heaven's unity may fill our lives.

Lord, use justice, understanding, and cooperation to empower our lawmakers to make bipartisan progress, enabling our Nation to meet the challenges of our time. Bring to fulfillment the ancient prophet's dream: "How good and pleasant it is for people to dwell together in unity." Lord, make our Senators vividly conscious that beyond the appraisal of constituents there falls upon their decisions and actions the searching light of Your judgment. Save them from weak and expedient choices as You use them to heal and bind to build and bless.

We pray in the Redeemer's Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable BENJAMIN NELSON led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, July 15, 2008.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable BENJAMIN NELSON, a Senator from the State of Nebraska, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. NELSON of Nebraska thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following leader remarks, there will be a period of morning business for up to 1 hour, with Senators allowed to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each. The Republicans will control the first 30 minutes, the majority the second 30 minutes.

Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 2731, the Global AIDS bill, at which time there will be a motion to table the DeMint amendment No. 5078 regarding funding limitations.

Therefore, Senators should expect a rollcall vote sometime shortly after 11 o'clock this morning. The Senate will recess from 12:30 p.m. until 2:15 p.m. to allow for the weekly caucuses to meet.

Senators should expect a busy day, with rollcall votes in relation to the Global AIDS bill throughout the day. As a reminder, there is an event for all Senators at the National Archives tonight from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

GAS PRICE REDUCTION ACT

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, as we stand here, Americans are suffering from the most dramatic oil shock in memory. A single barrel of crude oil costs almost three times today what it did a year and a half ago. This is a crisis that demands our full attention. Yet, until now, Democrats on Capitol Hill have responded as if high gas prices were a mere distraction. Their proposals have been the legislative equivalent of a fly swatter, when the American people are clamoring for the heavy artillery.

Part of the reason for this timid approach by our friends on the other side, as anyone can see, is the upcoming election. They have made no secret of the fact that they do not want to consider real legislation until Inauguration Day, when they hope their candidate will take the White House.

We need to realize Americans are more concerned, at the moment, about paying for groceries and filling their tanks with gas than they are about the political calendar. Americans are not thinking about next January, they are thinking about today. They expect their elected representatives in Washington to take serious steps now to lower the price of gas.

The proposal the Democratic leader outlined on gas prices last week falls laughably short. It has all the marks of a political exercise nervously cobbled

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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